

DRAFT

4/8/03

WATER ALLOCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT STREAMFLOW STANDARDS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES OF MEETING

February 12, 2003

Present: Alicia Good, Steve Donohue, Al Bettencourt, Eugenia Marks, Eugene Pepper, Ralph Abele, Bill Wandle, Kathy Crawley, Rich Blodgett, Elizabeth Scott, Carlene Newman, Alisa Richardson

Handouts:

by DEM:

- draft minutes to Jan. 14, 2002 meeting for approval
- draft charge for approval
- draft work tasks to accomplish objectives

by WRB:

- WAPAC Content Development – Committee Missions and Deliverables for Phase I

Approval of Minutes:

Draft minutes from Jan. 14, 2003 meeting were distributed. Approval was put off for next meeting, as this was the first time members had seen the draft.

Charge of Subcommittee:

After reviewing the most recent version, the group decided to reword the third objective of the charge to include identifying gaps in data other than streamflow gaging. This objective now reads, “identify gaps in streamflow gaging and other data”. With this change, the charge was finalized.

Discussion of tasks to accomplish objectives:

This month the WAPAC is focusing on what the deliverables will be for each subcommittee. Ms. Good explained that the subcommittee needs to define how it intends to accomplish the objectives by identifying concrete tasks. DEM staff came up with the draft workplan outline by identifying what needed to be accomplished to meet the objectives. The WAPAC list was incorporated as appropriate.

DEM is in the process of responding to questions raised by committee members on the first objective, an interim instream flow standard. This is an ongoing process to ensure that subcommittee members understand this proposed standard. Alisa Richardson and Carlene Newman are in the process of developing supporting documentation of the interim approach which will be presented to this group and to a technical advisory committee. DEM has identified and contacted the following people to review the document; Ralph Abele, Christine Lipsky, Jim Campbell, Ann Veeger from URI Geosciences Dept., Rick Jacobson from CT DEP who has been leading the CT effort and is on the board of the Instream Flow Council, Harold Ward, Vern Lang from USFWS and author of NE ABF approach. Ms. Crawley suggested that Eileen Panatier from NEWWA and Herb Johnston who is retired from USGS also be asked to review the documentation..

Gene Pepper asked whether a decision has been made that this instream flow standard as proposed is the direction to go in? Ms. Good explained that in the first meeting DEM presented the pros and cons of different methods for assessing instream flow and showed what streamflow would be required

DRAFT

4/8/03

from the different methods. The results were all close to ABF, therefore a modified ABF more applicable to RI conditions appeared to be an approach worth pursuing. There was concern that the proposed standard is too conservative. Ms Good explained that the proposed modified ABF would be one method, site specific methods are also an option. A new permittee could choose to apply the presumptive standard or conduct site specific evaluations. Since the RIABF is presumed to be protective it is likely to be conservative. In addition to these two methods, there is the overall watershed process, which will involve a statewide effort with the WRB to determine availability and best management in the each watershed.

The second objective would involve review of the different flow methodologies to come to agreement on a pick list for suitable methodologies for RI to use for site-specific standards. DEM thought the people best qualified to do that evaluations are those who have used them and are very familiar with the technical aspects of the methodologies such as ESS and USGS.

Kathy Crawley suggested using the Wood/Pawcatuck and Blackstone studies to assess impacts of the proposed standard. Ms. Richardson said she would like to test the proposed interim standard against some of the studies that are coming out in MA and other areas. It was decided that assessing the impacts of the interim standard and site specific methodology in Blackstone and Pawcatuck should also be included as a task.

Eugenia Marks suggested a public participation element should be incorporated into the workplan outline. It was decided to add an element for public workshops to each objective as appropriate. Ms Crawley said that the public outreach and education subcommittee can work on this task.

The third objective involves identifying streamflow and other data gaps. The USGS could present what they would view to be the recommended flow network for RI from which a plan could be assembled for attaining adequate flow gaging including data gaps to estimate flow on ungaged streams as well as determining where partial and continuous gages should be. It was decided to add identifying data gaps for the second and fourth objective and to coordinate with other subcommittees that are assessing data gaps.

The fourth objective of watershed specific standards is best addressed by evaluating what other states are doing. CT has taken a close look at this and has come up with recommendations for very detailed studies to establish watershed specific instream flow standards. MA has done some work with HSPS modeling, looking at habitat availability as a function of flow with target fish communities. It was discussed that one of the tasks the WRB was legislatively given is to determine the sustainable yields for the basins, where are those yields being tapped and are there basins that are overtaxed

Objective five is straightforward; to identify funding needs and sources. Since there is another subcommittee that is looking at funding the flow subcommittee will coordinate with it.

DEM suggest that objective six, recommendations on implementation, would develop as the entire instream flow process develops. Mr. Donohue asked to remove the language about DEM permitting as he does not wish to be involved directly in DEM permitting issues. Ms Scott suggested that under this objective a task should be added to develop a strategy to implement the protocol on a basin as a pilot test. This strategy would address how the methodology would be developed, how data will be collected and then conduct work to establish the watershed specific instream flow standards.

Next meeting

Next meeting scheduled for March 17, 2003 at 1:00PM in room 280 at DEM